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Editor: R. Palme Dutt

Disarmament and Peace

R. Palme Dutt looks at new prospects

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T.U.C. and Shop Stewards

A close-up of the General Council, by 'Vulcan'

★

Racists and Militarists

Ivor Montagu shows what lies behind the swastikas

THE LEFT MUST FIGHT
by Cllr. P. Grimshaw

'CRISIS OF SOCIALISM'?
by J. Berlioz (*France*)

CENTRAL AFRICA: PRISON-HOUSE
by R. Page Arnot

RAILWAYMAN ON CLAUSE 4
by L. Hurworth

FEBRUARY · 1960

One Shilling and Sixpence

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MOON AND SUMMIT

A DAY OR TWO after the terrible Auchengeich pit disaster I was standing outside the school gates of a Scottish mining village as the children were 'loosed'. I asked a little lad the way; and soon four or five were round me, eager to set the stranger right. As we settled down to talk, one after another dropped onto his heels; presently there was a row of miniature miners, resting their backs against the wall exactly like their fathers. With mixed feelings I got a sudden, intenser glimpse of what their fathers' lives were, and what theirs might be. I suppose we have all in the same way often enough in some expression or gesture of a child suddenly caught sight of the mature man, the grave elderly woman, of fifty years ahead. It is a troubling feeling at best, from which one turns away, in a flash more sharply aware that the sort of world we have lived in is not good enough for them. Such moments are painful, but all to the good. For the more keenly we see the present and refuse to accept it for ourselves and others, the stronger the resolve to sweep away obstacles between us and a peaceful socialist world. It is why the writings of a man like William Morris remain fresh and illuminating for us now, in the Summit Year. For he had the true artist's gift of longsight based on a piercing sense of reality, which visits us ordinary ones only in flashes.

On New Year's Day a *Hertfordshire* reader rang up to say how apt he thought the words of William Morris about socialist programmes which I quoted from *Commonweal* of 1890. People had the right, said he, to have the riches of these English Socialist writings restored to them. A new subscriber from *Gloucestershire* was moved 'with admiration for the vision of the old pioneers today as the world advances and people everywhere heed the demonstrations of those over whom reaction will trample no more'. He described how he stood in his garden, looking up at a clear sky disfigured by two fighter aircraft vapour trails. High above them and just visible was the moon at which Morris too had looked up in Hammersmith long ago. But today it has 'a cargo of little pennants cast there with unerring accuracy by the scientists of the Soviet Union. How much easier it is for us than for the Socialists of 70 years ago: But how much harder our task if we were without the means for promulgating socialism. The battle will be much better fought with *Labour Monthly* in the vanguard.' From *Canada* an old trade unionist who was a member of the Kelmscott Club in Hammersmith before he emigrated as a youngster over sixty years ago, sent £1 'in memory of William Morris', and made some shrewd observations about leaders who want common ownership dropped from the aims of the Labour Party today.

One of the pleasures of the beginning of the year is to get such greetings: *Tibet*, (Yes! Tibet!) *Australia, Hungary, China, Cyprus, France, Canada, Bulgaria, India, Rumania, Germany, Portugal, the United States* and the *Soviet Union*. Here's one who emigrated to *Australia* in 1947, where he 'soon realised that it was still capitalism we were living in, with the consequent need for clear thinking which *L.M.* so expertly gives'. As a thank-you for our 'consistent struggle for peace and for a better life', he sent £5 saved from his holiday pay. From the other side of that vast country

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Notes of the Month

DISARMAMENT AND PEACE

'The disarmament problem is the most vital, the most burning problem of our day. At the present time it is indeed the question of questions.'

(N. S. Khrushchov, press interview, December 30, 1959.)

ON February 13-14 the British Peace Committee is holding a National Disarmament Conference in London. This is timely and important. The new unilateral reduction of armed forces by the Soviet Union to a level below those of the United States, and below the level proposed by the West for the Soviet Union as a basis for a general disarmament agreement, has brought the whole question sharply to the forefront. We are now manifestly reaching the months of decision. The all too protracted proceedings of the Geneva Conference for the banning of nuclear tests, which has already in spite of everything reached unanimity on the majority of the points of a draft agreement, are now approaching the culminating stage. It is recognised by the widest sections of opinion that no excuse remains for failing to reach the long awaited agreement, unless the technique of ceaselessly raising new objections and obstacles, as soon as the previous ones have been laboriously cleared out of the way (as at the present moment with the allegations concerning under-

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ground explosions), is to become established as a permanent technique of infinite obstruction. The urgency of decision is underlined by the United States announcement of official resumption of liberty of action from the beginning of this year to conduct new tests. It is underlined by the French warning to aircraft of their preparation at any moment to explode their first atomic bomb in the Sahara (in defiance of the United Nations vote of 49 to 15 against it, and of the protests of all the African peoples). It is underlined by the dangerous and almost irreversible stage now reached in the nuclear rearmament of the neo-Nazi militarists of Western Germany. In March the new Ten Nation Committee to prepare a general disarmament agreement is due to meet at Geneva. In May the long delayed Summit Conference is at last due to meet. The Supreme Soviet proposals for total disarmament in four years, presented to the United Nations Assembly and to all Governments and parliaments last year, are at the heart of the present international situation. Now as never before is the moment for action of the peoples in all the countries of the world if peace is to conquer war.

Lenin, Interplanetary Travel and Disarmament

Forty years ago, in his interview with H. G. Wells in 1920, Lenin made the prediction that the establishment of interplanetary communication would mean that the technological potential, having become boundless, would put an end to violence as a means and method of progress. As we know, the blinkered outlook of the Western European intellectual, H. G. Wells, at that time, who could only see the limitless devastation of Russia after years of war and civil war and peasant backwardness as a foretaste of the future collapse of human civilisation, boggled at the fanciful picture of 'the dreamer in the Kremlin' who foresaw the electrification of Russia combined with soviet power bringing communism. Yet today, with the Soviet Union within visible reach of soon becoming the world's greatest industrial power and already leading in scientific and technological development, the basis for this prediction of Lenin has become obvious even to the most superficial. In consequence it is now rather a matter for incredulous amazement that at that time even the vision of a Wells, who in his youthful socialist days had shown himself capable of brilliant insights into the future in his scientific anticipations, before he became corrupted by wealth, chauvinism, the first world war and the higher theology, should have been incapable of understanding Lenin's even relatively

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elementary prediction about the future industrial and social advance of the Soviet Union.

A Daring Prediction

How much less could he—the inventor of *The War of the Worlds* and to this extent precursor of the very much inferior and unimaginative American 'Sci-fic'—have had the slightest inkling of the meaning and importance of the very much more daring and subtle prediction of Lenin about the significance of the approaching era of interplanetary travel in relation to disarmament and the solution of the age-old problem of human violence. For it is only after four decades that the first hint of the fuller import and substantive basis of this prediction, which was almost ignored at the time, is beginning to become evident in experience today, when news of projects for interplanetary travel and for disarmament jostle one another every day for first place on the front pages of the newspapers.

Disarmament—From Utopia to Science

A manifest transformation has taken place today in the whole climate of the discussion of disarmament. Previously the theme of disarmament was either the happy hunting ground for the transparent hypocrisies of the representatives of the imperialist powers or the melancholy mausoleum for the burial of the pathetic credulities and earnest aspirations of utopian well-wishers of mankind. Today disarmament is indeed not yet any closer to achievement. On the contrary, the scale of armaments and the intensity of the arms race was never higher. But the question of disarmament or reduction of armaments as a concrete immediate issue for negotiation dominates international politics as never before. It is true that what President Eisenhower has recently called with justice 'the munitions lobby', which is by no means confined to the United States, but operates in every modern major capitalist country whose economy of the 'new', 'progressive', 'contemporary capitalism' is so heavily geared to arms contracts, is more active than ever to forestall the menace it sees arising. But the panic of the Stock Exchanges at every hint of arms reduction is genuine. Concrete economic plans to cope with the problems which would arise from disarmament are now the object of obligatory study in every governmental office, even at the same time as the pressure continues to increase arms expenditure. A new power is pressing forward the question of disarmament into the forefront. This arises not only from the qualitative change with the limitless destructive power and

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suicidal potential of modern nuclear and missile weapons. It arises also and above all because the new non-imperialist elements in world politics, represented by the socialist one-third of the world, together with the newly independent countries and tremendous movements of national liberation, and with the will of the peoples in all countries for peace, are transforming world politics. To sense this change it is only necessary to contrast what happened the last time the Soviet Union proposed disarmament in 1927.

1. What Happened in 1927

The last time the Soviet Union tabled an official proposal for total disarmament by all nations was in 1927. It is worth recalling what happened.

Preparatory Commission on Disarmament

The Preparatory Commission on Disarmament of the old League of Nations had been in session for two years since 1925 without the Soviet Union. Nine years after the first world war, and twelve years before the opening of the second, the old League of Nations, whose Covenant imposed the obligation to limit armaments, had reached the stage of a 'Preparatory Commission' which had sat for two years without result. During these two years not a single concrete proposal for disarmament had been placed before it. Not until the latter part of 1927 were the diplomatic obstacles to the representation of the Soviet Union overcome.

A Startling Proposal

In November, 1927, the Soviet representative, Maxim Litvinov, arrived and staggered the Disarmament Commission by proposing —disarmament. He tabled a complete draft resolution for the disbanding of all armies, navies and air forces, destruction of all war stocks and dissolution of all general staffs and War Ministries in all countries, to be completed within one year, or—if this pace should be felt to be too rapid—in stages within four years. The effect of this startling proposal was to bring a new element into the entire discussion. In the words of the old *Daily Herald* (which had not yet then become the organ of Odhams):

> Mr. Litvinov has done one of those simple things which are startling by their very simplicity. He has invited the Disarmament Commission to

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discuss—Disarmament! The reply of the other Governments should afford a significant revelation of their real intentions.

(*Daily Herald*, December 1, 1927.)

The 'significant revelation' was not long delayed.

A Cool Reception

In contrast to the at any rate formal politeness and even seriousness with which the same Soviet proposals have been received today, one-third of a century later, at that time the anger, hostility and even ostentatious demonstrations of professed contempt from the representatives of Western imperialism were little concealed. A commentator has described the scene as Litvinov addressed the delegates:

A considerable number of the delegates sought to conceal their embarrassment or express their ill will by descending to the tricks of schoolboy rudeness, shifting in their chairs, coughing, whispering to each other and managing at times to make so much ill-bred noise that Litvinov could scarcely be heard.

Lord Halifax rather ostentatiously left the room. Sir John Simon closed his eyes as though fast asleep, a signal to his colleagues that he was quite properly, of course, bored, but also a good camouflage, for actually Sir John slumbered not, nor slept. He was too intelligent not to be fully alive to what was going on, and afterwards congratulated Litvinov quite warmly on the force and ability of his argument. Sir John was a connoisseur of argument.

(A. V. Pope. *Maxim Litvinov*. Secker & Warburg, 1943. p. 233.)

A Hunt for Arguments

At that time the Western powers were not so experienced in producing all kinds of elaborate pretexts and conditions and loopholes about 'control' and 'inspection' and 'practical difficulties' and 'dangers of evasion' in order to cover their opposition to disarmament. The delegates of this Disarmament Preparatory Commission found themselves at a loss what to say in face of these straightforward proposals for disarmament. *The Times* reported: 'For a while it appeared as if nobody would reply to the Soviet proposals'. Then at last an old Socialist renegade, M. Paul-Boncour, endeavoured to offer an answer. He declared that all would long for such a simple solution, but that it was necessary to take into account the 'international responsibility of states'—presumably the international responsibility to make war. Further, he argued that in the event of disarmament 'small nations would be at the mercy of large nations'—this at a time when the heavily armed imperialist powers

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still held the majority of mankind under their colonial domination. The Greek Foreign Minister followed him up by coming out brutally with the argument that there could be no organised society without force. Others claimed that total disarmament would be contrary to the Charter of the League of Nations, which enjoined only the limitation of armaments. In Britain a Tory Government was in power at that time. Lord Cushendun (more notorious as the former R. McNeill) declared on behalf of the Tory Government that 'we cannot disarm now because we have already done so'. It is clear that the Macmillan-Hailsham method of sheer effrontery is not so new. Further, he argued that Parliament cannot surrender its sovereign right of decision on war.

Press Abuse

The great organs of the British Tory and Liberal 'free press' disgraced themselves as usual, at this historic moment of testing, with wholesale vituperation and abuse of the Soviet proposals for total disarmament.

> It may be that there are some people who will really be deceived by this clumsy and cynical farce; they cannot be many. (*Daily News.*)

> In the evident hope of putting decent and honest Governments in a false position he has put forward a scheme which can only be described as grotesque. (*Daily Mail.*)

> The Russians know just as well as does the rest of the world that apart from such States as are virtually disarmed already, there is not one which is ready even to consider such a proposal. (*Manchester Guardian.*)

> To say that such a scheme might have been formulated by any schoolboys' debating club would be unfair to a rising generation whose minds are much less immature than those of its forerunners. (*Daily Telegraph.*)

> When the Soviet absurdities had been comfortably relegated to cold storage, the delegates took up the proper business of the meeting—namely, the constitution of a new Commission of Security. (*The Times.*)

All true to type. Let them glory in their record.

Ramsay MacDonald and Disarmament

What of Labour? Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who was at that time Leader of the Labour Party, said: 'If the Russian method is the right one, then God made the world and especially man all wrong; for there is not a nation except a few small ones will pursue it'. He suggested that the Russians should disarm first. However, the pressure from within the labour movement was so strong that

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by December 8, 1927, the National Joint Council, representing the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party, adopted a resolution welcoming the Soviet proposals. The old Labour and Socialist International Executive declared: 'Although the Labour and Socialist International is strongly in favour of total disarmament, it will not commit the error of inducing people to believe in the possibility of its immediate realisation'.

'Bluff' and the Outcome

When the text of the draft proposal for total disarmament came up for the decisive vote in 1928, the Tory Government representative, Lord Cushendun, offered the further argument that the flaw in total disarmament was that it did not make provision for necessary 'limited wars'. He need not have been so anxious. The next decade saw plenty of 'limited wars', expanding into the second world war. Finally the Soviet proposals were voted down by the unanimous vote of all the imperialist representatives against the single Soviet vote. The significance of this vote remains a historical landmark. All the press had denounced the Soviet proposals as 'bluff', 'propaganda', 'cynical deception', 'impudent'. But if the proposals were bluff, why not have called the bluff by accepting them? The unanimous vote of the representatives of the imperialist powers against total disarmament revealed that they dared not risk voting for it in case it might be carried. Thereby they revealed their realisation of the basis of imperialism in armed force. Only socialism could stand without fear or qualification for peace and total disarmament.

A Lesson for Today

The lesson stands for today. We know what followed the rejection of total disarmament in 1928. The ferocious arms race of the thirties. Nazi rearmament by the will and complicity of the West. The aggression of Hitler and the Axis. The Second World War with its scores of millions of dead. Now we have a second chance. This time the stakes are a thousand times higher with the deadlier character of modern weapons. This time the proposal for total disarmament has won support from the widest sections of opinion. It has become obvious, even to many of the strategic experts, that, just as the only final answer to the menace of nuclear destruction is to ban and destroy all nuclear weapons, so the only final answer to the endless wrangle about nuclear and so-called 'conventional' weapons, which is used as an excuse to prevent the rejection of

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either, is to scrap the lot. Hence the timeliness of the renewed Soviet proposals for total disarmament in the present situation. Let us do everything in our power to make sure that this time we do not lose our chance.

2. *Last Frenzies of the Nuclear Illusion?*

The new Soviet proposals for total disarmament, which in essence reproduce those of 1927, have been received in a markedly different fashion from the vulgar exhibition of a third of a century ago. The method of the supercilious sneer and schoolboy rudeness, which was at that time the correct etiquette in all refined Western upper class circles over any reference to the Soviet Union, is now out. The new proposals have been received, not yet with support, but with careful attention and respect. This is not merely the homage that vice pays to virtue. It is rather the homage that the worshippers of the policy of strength pay to strength. The Western policy of strength sought to use their supposed superior armed strength to impose their will upon the world. But socialism uses its now manifestly superior strategic strength on the side of peace and disarmament. This is the new factor. The daily accelerating advance and superiority in the rate of development of the socialist world, and especially the visible superiority in those spheres of scientific and technological development which are always calculated by the West first and foremost in military and strategic terms, is transforming world politics. This is the new factor which, given the active support of the peoples of the entire world, can win peace and disarmament.

Obsolete Nuclear Bombast

Sometimes it is said that the immeasurable destructive power of modern nuclear weapons has compelled a new approach on all sides. This is a factor. But it is not the decisive factor. For the first response of Western statesmen to nuclear weapons was to exult in the belief that they now had absolute power to impose their will upon the world and to compel the Soviet Union to surrender to their terms. The megalomaniac boasts and bloodcurdling threats of destruction uttered by the most prominent Western political leaders and publicists at that time, when even such a former radical pacifist as Bertrand Russell was advocating a preventive atomic war on the Soviet Union, or *Colliers* was producing millions of copies of its special issue, with Priestley as main contributor, depicting on the

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cover a triumphant G.I. Army of Occupation imposed on Moscow and the Soviet Union, can hardly be credible today to the younger generation which did not know those years.

How the Wise Can Become Foolish

Indeed, Bertrand Russell, when confronted with what he had said in 1947, issued a categoric denial in 1953, denouncing the allegation as 'a Communist invention' (*New York Nation,* October 17, 1953), and threatening the *New Statesman* with legal proceedings for repeating it. Only when he was faced with the inescapable record of his own words did he admit the facts in 1958 ('Why I Changed My Mind', *Saturday Evening Post,* May 31, 1958), and apologise in 1959 to the communists whom he had falsely accused of lying:

> Although it may seem incredible, I believed the statement to be entirely correct at the time when I made it. I had, in fact, completely forgotten that I had ever thought a policy of threat involving possible war desirable. In 1958 Mr. Alfred Kohlberg and Mr. Walter W. Marseille brought to my notice things which I had said in 1947, and I read these with amazement. I have no excuse to offer. (Earl Russell in *The Listener,* May 28, 1959.)

The episode is only worth recalling today as a warning example of how anti-communist hysteria can reduce even the wisest to folly. Bertrand Russell's noble efforts in the cause of nuclear disarmament today have constituted an atonement for his previous guilt in advocating an atomic anti-Soviet war in the era of the height of the cold war madness, even though some of the anti-communist bees may still buzz in his bonnet.

Churchill, Alanbrooke and the Atom Bomb

But what of the main governmental and political leaders at that time? The recently published Alanbrooke Memoirs have told us how Churchill rubbed his hands over the prospect of using the atom bomb as the invincible weapon to compel the Soviet Union to surrender:

> He was already seeing himself as capable of eliminating all the Russian centres of industry and population, without taking into account any of the connected problems, such as delivery of the bomb, production of bombs, possibility of Russians also possessing such bombs, etc. He had at once painted a wonderful picture of himself as the sole possessor of these bombs and capable of dumping them where he wished, thus all-powerful and capable of dictating to Stalin.

Such was the higher lunacy of Western statesmanship, brought up from babyhood to play with toys of war (the latest London Christmas catalogue of toys included a realistic 'Rocket Site with models

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of actual Missiles' as no doubt especially appropriate for this season for the enlightenment of Western children, while others spent their Christmas in gaol in the effort to save humanity from Rocket Sites and Missiles).

Earl Attlee and the Atom Bomb

And Attlee, Labour's Leader at the time? Premier Attlee who surrendered Britain to potential destruction as the main American atom bomber base (now becoming increasingly blocked up with additional American nuclear weapons and bombers, as other countries like France spew them out). Earl Attlee was given the Alanbrooke Memoirs to review in the *Observer* of November 1, 1959, and praised the narrative as demonstrating Churchill's

> imaginative and prescient views on the effect of the discovery of the atomic bomb.

Churchill at least woke up by 1950 from his dreams to the facts of life, and drew the practical conclusion by proposing a Summit Conference, which proposal was immediately denounced by Bevin and Cripps as contrary to Labour Government policy. But Earl Attlee in 1959 still seems to be living in the clouds of his Labour Government's anti-Soviet megalomania. Earl Attlee has not even the gift of hindsight.

Pricking the Nuclear Bubble

Professor Blackett has described in 1958, under the title 'Atomic Heretic' (*Listener*, September 11, 1958), how in 1945

> speeches, editorials, articles and headlines were full of such ideas as 'The absolute weapon', 'Armies and all other weapons are obsolete', 'Russia has been reduced to second class status overnight'.

He explains how he 'gradually' came to question these assumptions and by 1948 published opposite conclusions:

> During the first two years after the war I gave much thought to this problem, and gradually came to certain conclusions that were in marked conflict with official British and American opinion . . . I held that official opinion over-estimated the decisiveness of atomic bombs of the Hiroshima type in a major war against Russia. . . . I also thought that the importance of strong land forces was being greatly under-estimated. . . .
>
> When I published these views in a book in 1948 I was not altogether surprised to be violently attacked from many quarters. . . . During the ten years since my book was published more and more of my military views seem to have become generally accepted. This of course made my crime in 1948 still more grievous; I had committed the unforgivable sin of being a premature military realist.

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We have every respect for the invaluable authoritative work of Professor Blackett in exposing the nuclear strategic illusion by 1948. At the same time, it may be worth pointing out that reference to the issue of *Labour Monthly* for September, 1945, will reveal already then at the time a considered analysis and exposure of the fallacies of the Western strategic conception of world domination and superiority over the Soviet Union on the basis of the atom bomb, or of the supposedly obsolete character of land forces, as well as an estimate of the future strategic effect as likely to lead, not to Anglo-American domination over the Soviet Union, but to American domination over Britain—all written in these Notes, not two years after, but within less than a fortnight after the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima. Marxists have reason to sympathise with Professor Blackett's plaint of the fate of the 'premature realist'; for Marxists are well used to being denounced for prematurely demonstrating truths at the time which years after are recognised on all sides.

Sandys' Castles in the Air

Not abstract argument, but the collapse of the dream of Western nuclear superiority, has led to a new climate. Even the slogans of the fifties and the early Dulles Republican era—'Roll Back the Frontier of Communism', 'Massive Retaliation', 'Liberation of the Captive Peoples' and the like—sound like echoes from prehistory. There have followed the slogans of the new stage, based on recognition of the end of the illusions of nuclear superiority, and offering instead the new illusions of the 'Nuclear Deterrent' and 'Peace Through Mutual Terror'—a modernised version of the most ancient fallacy which has accompanied every arms race and preceded every major war. Minister of Defence Sandys was given the job to concentrate everything on the hydrogen bomb and rockets and missiles, proclaiming the grand strategy (in the Defence White Paper of 1958) that Britain will use nuclear weapons first even though the other side does not use them. On this basis Sandys' mission was to cut expenditure on the older forms of arms and armed forces, since the same White Paper made clear that Britain could not be defended anyway, and that the task of the fighters must be to defend the nuclear bases, not the people.

From Sandys to Watkinson

Inspired by this strategy, Sandys proceeded to pour out money for the new visions of future nuclear weapons, and to hack away at the older armed services to a point bringing things close to

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mutiny among the officers. He then departed, leaving confusion worse confounded. For it rapidly became clear that the Sandys strategy was in ruins. On the one hand, Britain could not hope to have the resources to compete effectively in the deadly nuclear weapons race, and the consequent very limited stock of older bombs, lack of means to deliver them, and dependence on the clumsy, doubtfully operational, vulnerable and semi-obsolete Thors granted by the United States made nonsense of the Sandys strategic conception. On the other hand, the actual limited wars, essentially colonial wars, on which Britain was in fact engaged or likely to be engaged, could not be effectively fought with nuclear weapons, and required the older types of arms and forces. Accordingly, the Tory Election Manifesto of the autumn of 1959 proclaimed the aim that the existing armed forces must be 'extensively re-equipped'. The game begins again from the beginning. Exit Sandys, the visionary apostle of one-sided nuclear war as the grand solution. Enter the new Minister of Defence, Watkinson, with the task to conduct the 'extensive re-equipment' of the existing armed forces, alongside the already rising cost of the nuclear projects. How much longer must this strategic lunacy continue, which brings already crushing economic burdens and the possibility of catastrophic consequences in the future?

Soviet Arms Cuts

It is in this context that the Soviet unilateral reduction of armed forces by one-third (by nearly two-thirds during the past five years) takes on its special significance. Premier Khrushchov's announcement of this cut, giving precise figures of Soviet armed forces at successive stages since the war, lays many ghosts of ancient cold war propaganda. Thus Premier Attlee on February 12, 1951, to justify the gigantic British rearmament programme which broke the Labour Government, stated in the House of Commons with his customary bland assurance in repeating obvious falsehoods: 'Soviet Russia did not demobilise its forces at the end of the war.' Similarly the U.S. State Department spokesman, commenting on the Soviet cuts, stated: 'For its part, the United States, not in 1960, but immediately following World War II, demobilised the great bulk of its armed forces from a peak level of 12·3 million' (to 3·5 million). We now know that the Soviet Union immediately after the war demobilised its armed forces from 11·3 million in 1945 to 2·8 million in 1948. So far from the size of Soviet armed forces in 1948—as falsely alleged in Western cold war propaganda—compelling the

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West to enter on the path of the North Atlantic Treaty, gigantic rearmament and Nazi rearmament, it was the Western offensive of the North Atlantic Treaty, gigantic rearmament and Nazi rearmament which compelled the Soviet Union reluctantly to build up anew its armed forces from 2·8 million in 1948 to 5·7 million in 1955. After the Summit, reduction was renewed. *The Times* endeavours to claim equal virtue for Britain:

> The British Government have also been cutting down military manpower rather longer and on a comparable scale—by 38 per cent since 1952. When the present Soviet cuts are completed the Soviet Government will have reduced its armed forces by about 37 per cent since 1954.
>
> (*The Times*, January 15, 1960.)

In fact, the reduction from 5,763,000 in 1955 to 2,423,000 following the cuts now announced in 1960 represents a cut of 58 per cent.

Rockets and Manpower

Premier Khrushchov reaffirmed that the Soviet Union would not restart nuclear tests if the Western powers did not start them. He called anew for a complete ban on nuclear weapons and drastic reduction of armed forces by international agreement. In this context he warned that Soviet rocket development had rendered out of date the bombers and other antiquated forces on which Western strategy still relied ('The Air Force is to be replaced by rockets almost completely'), as well as the need for large armed forces, and that Soviet nuclear equipment was such as to doom any nuclear aggressor.

> The Soviet Union has accumulated so many nuclear, atomic and hydrogen weapons, so many rockets to deliver nuclear heads to the territory of a possible aggressor, that, in the event of any madman's trying to attack our State or any other Socialist State, it would be able literally to obliterate from the face of the earth an attacking country or countries.

'Even more formidable' weapons were stated to be in course of production.

Contrast of Two Worlds

The usual brasshat woodenheads have at once sought to argue that the exploded Sandys theory of isolated reliance on nuclear weapons at the expense of 'conventional' armed forces is now vindicated by Khrushchov's declaration. The contrast is absolute. The Sandys theory advocated that Britain, on the basis of overwhelming nuclear inferiority, should use nuclear weapons first, even though the other side did not use them, and thus invite speedy

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destruction. The Khrushchov declaration, on a basis of overwhelming nuclear superiority, warns off any would-be nuclear aggressor against embarking on this fatal path, and simultaneously calls for the banning and destruction of all nuclear weapons. It is obvious that this policy corresponds to the interests of the peoples of all countries.

Why Every One Trusts the Soviet Union

It is indeed a remarkable situation which has now been reached. Soviet nuclear superiority is now universally recognised and increases every month. The Washington correspondent of the *Observer* has summarised the conclusions now reached by American official opinion, including 'even White House sources':

> 1. If Russia launched a surprise attack one year from now, between 112 and 168 of her Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles are expected to reach their targets. These are the 50 Strategic Air Command bases in the United States.
>
> 2. The U.S. Atlas launching sites are vulnerable to attack from I.C.B.M. and submarine-launched missiles. Equally vulnerable for the same reasons are the 40 1,500 mile range Thors in Britain.
>
> 3. Because of improved Soviet anti-aircraft missiles, the U.S. Air Force says publicly that it can no longer rely on high altitude flying, but must go in at tree-top level.... The Strategic Air Command bombers are based on 50 airfields. They are subsonic, not designed for tree-top bombing.
>
> (*Observer*, January 10, 1960.)

Checkmate for the entire present Western NATO nuclear strategy. The game is up. If the Soviet Union were the aggressive power depicted by the NATO addicts, the Soviet Union has now the power by a surprise attack to wipe out at one stroke every base of the Western alliance in the United States, Britain or elsewhere. Yet no one is frightened. The international climate has improved. The politicians sleep quietly in their beds. Even the American generals and admirals no longer jump out of the window in a panic like Forrestal. Why? Because they all know—whatever their words, they show by their deeds that they know—that the Soviet Union has no intention of attacking. The Soviet Union uses its nuclear superiority to press for the destruction of all nuclear weapons and for all-round disarmament, preferably total disarmament.

Communism and Peace

That is what Communism means. When the Soviet Union made its first proposals for total disarmament in 1927, one-third of a

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century ago, and the enlightened commentators of the heavily armed West sneered at the proposal as an abject confession of Soviet weakness and fear, Stalin said:

> The Soviet Government must pursue, firmly and unwaveringly, its policy of peace and of peaceful relations notwithstanding all the provocative moves of our enemies, notwithstanding all the pinpricks at our prestige. The provocateurs in the camp of the enemy taunt us and will continue to taunt us that our policy of peace is the child of our weakness, of the weakness of our army.... We cannot and must not play into their hands. We must go our way, defending the cause of peace, demonstrating our will to peace.
>
> (J. V. Stalin, *Izvestia*, July 28, 1927.)

Now the boot is on the other foot. No one dare question any longer the overwhelming superiority of strength from which the proposals for peace and total disarmament are made. This is our chance, the chance for all the peoples of the world to win peace, the chance brought us by the victory of socialism. We cannot afford to lose it. The desperate gamblers of the cold war are still active and powerful. Neo-Nazism, fostered under Adenauer, and internationally organised, has deemed the moment ripe to come into the open again simultaneously in a score of countries. Only the united strength of the peoples can curb the war-makers, follow up the initiative opened by the socialist world, and win the victory for peace and disarmament. Let us do all in our power to hasten the fulfilment in our time of the inspiring prediction of Lenin, that the era of interplanetary travel shall see the end of violence in human affairs.

January 18, 1960. R.P.D.

LABOUR MONTHLY TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

WHAT CONCLUSIONS FROM EVENTS IN SPAIN?

The great lesson is contained in the sequence of events. First Germany, then Austria, then Spain. In Germany no united front was built and thereby fascism was allowed to seize power. In Austria, although preparations were made, fascism was allowed to attack first. In Spain the workers attacked first to prevent the growth of fascism with the consequence of a most serious setback to fascism in Spain. In England we can move even quicker by showing our detestation of fascist methods and organising a united front against fascism.

(From *What I Saw in Spain* by Leah Manning, February, 1935.)

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THE GENERAL COUNCIL AND THE SHOP STEWARDS

'Vulcan'

THE General Council of the Trades Union Congress first came into existence at the Cardiff Congress in 1921. The idea of a 'General Staff' to co-ordinate the work of affiliated unions arose out of the industrial upheavals of 1919, when the cotton spinners, the Clyde shipbuilding and engineering workers, the miners, the police, the railway workers and many others were engaged in strike actions.

The strike of the railwaymen took place in the autumn of 1919 and was successful. But during it the Lloyd George Government adopted a most threatening attitude towards the railwaymen and openly lined up behind the railway companies. This was met with strong declarations of solidarity from other sections of workers and a readiness to act in support of the railwaymen. Immediately after the termination of this strike a call was made for a special Trades Union Congress to be held. It took place in December, 1919, and decided that it was necessary to strengthen the structure of trade unionism by the formation of a General Council under the control of the T.U.C. as 'a central co-ordinating body representative of the whole trade union movement'.

A scheme was approved at the Portsmouth Congress in 1920, and finally became operative in September, 1921, at the Cardiff Congress. Here it was mandated '*to promote common action by the trade union movement on general questions, such as wages and hours of labour*'.

It is not the purpose of this article to examine the extent to which that laudable mandate has been actually applied by the General Council over the thirty-eight years of its existence: but one thing is absolutely clear by consideration of the present situation, that the mandate is not being applied today. Instead of promoting common action on wages and hours of labour, members of the General Council—with a few honourable exceptions—seem to be more concerned with promoting witch-hunts against communist trade union officials (such as we have witnessed in connection with the Electrical Trades Union) and militant shop stewards who are defending the principle of common action on wages, hours of labour and numerous other issues such as: for hundred per cent trade unionism and the rate for the job; against speed-up, victimisation

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and redundancy. Since the General Strike in 1926 the General Council has never been completely free of the taint of political witch-hunting, as instanced in the denial, year by year, of a seat on the General Council to Arthur Horner, the communist General Secretary and nominee of the National Union of Mineworkers. For years the most flamboyant carrier of the witch-hunt disease was Arthur Deakin. He is dead, but his noisome political soul goes marching on within the portals of the T.U.C. headquarters.

Political witch-hunts never stay centred on the prey for which they started. The experience of McCarthyism in America and Hitlerism in Germany clearly demonstrated that. So it is—in a milder form of the disease—with our T.U.C. General Council now conducting an enquiry into 'unofficial' strikes.

If this enquiry were intended to indict the employers for conduct provoking strike action, we ought to welcome it; but there has been no statement or sign from the General Council that such is the purpose. On the contrary, over a long period their attitude toward militant trade union activity in industry, and the public pronouncements of some of its principal members, clearly indicate that this enquiry has been started to arrest militancy of the trade union rank and file, not to encourage it. So *The Times* of January 4 reports that the Minister of Labour, in reply to a request from a number of Conservative M.P.s for a Government Commission on trade unions to be set up, refers to 'some trade union members who are abusing their position'; and concludes: 'I think we must first give the T.U.C. the opportunity to deal with its undisciplined minority'.

We must remember the circumstances in which this enquiry was started. The capitalist press were pouring out abuse against shop stewards and denouncing the workers engaged in strike action as public enemies, irrespective of whether the strike was 'official' or not. But in the strikes which had not received the official blessing of the union executives—either because there had not been time to do so, or because they were not to be encouraged to continue—the press was particularly vitriolic. They invented the new derogatory term of 'wildcat strike', which they repeated in banner headlines daily. This new jungle term was also being shouted from Tory platforms, over the radio and TV, and even in Parliament. The capitalist press in particular were demanding that trade union executives take disciplinary action against their members involved.

This was the moment when the General Council on behalf of the entire trade union movement could have issued a slashing condemnation of the press bosses for their interference in trade union

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affairs, and given a positive reply to the insults and news distortions. They could have been told in straight language that the unions needed no advice from them; that they had never assisted trade unionism against the employing class in any struggle, whether official or not; and that their whole record of news reporting had always been prejudiced against the workers, when seeking improvements in wages and working conditions, or even when merely defending themselves against attack by the employers. Here was the opportunity for the General Council to speak out boldly in defence of the workers and to tell the press lords precisely what they thought of their long reactionary record. Had they done so it would have had a great stimulating effect on trade union morale and on recruitment of the unorganised; at the same time it would have strengthened the work of shop stewards and other rank and file delegates in defending and improving working conditions. But instead they bowed to the clamour of the press campaign and commenced their enquiry into strike activities as though there was something evil to be unearthed.

It is therefore not surprising that many shop stewards committees, trade union branches and trades councils, have promptly passed resolutions opposing this enquiry. The Midland Federation of Trades Councils, representing 500,000 organised workers, at its December Conference approved a resolution from the Coventry Trades Council of concern at the readiness of some trade union officials 'to succumb to the deliberate propaganda campaign in the gutter press'. But it is not only in the lower organs of the unions that opposition has been expressed. At least five Executive Committees of important national unions have opposed answering the questionnaire from the General Council; others gave no reply.

Shop stewards quite rightly resent any enquiry prompted by a smear campaign against them in the daily press. They are elected representatives of their fellow trade unionists in the workshops and depots, in accordance with the constitution of their unions, and they accept the position on the understanding that they are answerable to their own union in carrying out their duties. They know that the capitalist press has never represented them in a favourable light to the general public. On the contrary, when they are mentioned at all, it is usually to ridicule or portray them as the agents of mischief and discord in industrial relations. That, of course, is a complete travesty; and any union official who allows himself to be influenced by that should stop and reflect seriously about his own responsibilities to the movement.

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In industry today, especially in establishments of notable size, shop stewards are an essential part of our trade union machinery. Day by day they have to resolve a multitude of problems that arise in industrial relations; they are the front line of defence in trade union conditions in the factory. Without them the unions could not guarantee the observance by employers of any national or district agreement or even the regulations of the Factory Acts. Recognition of shop stewards and their *right* to conduct 'first stage' negotiations in the factory was never readily conceded by the employers. The constitutions of many unions made provision for the election of shop stewards many years ago; but their functions were restricted to simply informing the union District Committee of the rates of wages and conditions obtaining in the shop; notifying the union of vacancies for labour; periodically inspecting union cards to check arrears of contributions; and approaching unorganised workers to join the union. Even those simple innocuous duties generally had to be carried out surreptitiously for fear of victimisation, because employers were opposed to having shop stewards in their establishments. It was a hard fight which required men of strong trade union conviction to break down that opposition; and it was not until December, 1917, after many bitter disputes in the workshops, that the employers were compelled to enter into agreements granting recognition for shop stewards and making provision for them taking up individual grievances and conducting first stage negotiations on matters of common concern in the factory before union officials were called in. Today, the system of negotiating rights for shop stewards has become firmly established throughout many industries; but not infrequently we still find employers who refuse to recognise shop stewards. Others, whilst recognising them, try to restrict their functions in such a way as to render them ineffective. Such a situation can easily lead to a strike, because the workers believe that such an employer is not amenable to a reasonable discussion.

Usually shop stewards only come into the news when there is a stoppage of work and then they are represented through the daily press as the instigators of the trouble. The public are never told of the thousands of issues which could have caused strikes but have been quietly resolved by patient negotiation on the part of the shop steward with the employer. They are not told of the many occasions where the unreasonable attitude of the employer leads to the shop steward having to call in the union official before a settlement can be reached. This is the quiet and steady unpaid service which the shop stewards are constantly rendering for trade unionism day

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by day. They generally do it at a financial loss, especially in piecework shops where taking up grievances of others with the employer means loss of piecework earnings to themselves. Curtailment of the existing rights of shop stewards could lead to a weakening or even a breakdown in factory organisation, which would deprive the members of the protection which they now get in the factory. It could result in a heavy loss in trade union membership and open the way for the employers offensive against wages and working conditions. To understand this requires only an elementary knowledge of the history and experiences of the trade union movement. The first targets for attack by the employer if the defensive line of the shop stewards were broken down would be those numerous improvements in rates of wages and working conditions, over and above what is provided for in national and district agreements, which have been negotiated directly in the factory by shop stewards. Let there be no doubt about it: these are very numerous and extensive today; so much so, that the employers federations quote them in negotiations with the union executives and endeavour to show that there is no need for further improvements in the national agreements. Of course, the simple answer of the unions to that kind of argument is: 'Well, let us protect them by embodiment in the national agreement and by extending them to those who are still on the minimum standards'. But this the employers federations refuse to do because they constantly hope for a situation in which those plus rates and conditions can be taken away. Furthermore, it requires only a little imagination to realise that problems and complaints dealt with by shop stewards in most organised factories today, especially in the large modern establishments, are so numerous, often requiring immediate attention, that the limited number of full-time union officers could never find time to cope with them without the aid of shop stewards.

Yet today, there is still enormous scope for the extension of the trade union movement. Taking the industrial and ancilliary workers as a whole still less than fifty per cent are organised. This is the problem which should be disturbing the T.U.C. General Council, not the bogies raised by the capitalist press. Furthermore, in these days when the unions separately are striving to maintain wage standards against rising cost of living and the profiteering of the employers, there is plenty of work for the General Council to do in co-ordinating the efforts of affiliated unions and, in accordance with their original mandate, 'promoting common action on general questions such as wages and hours of labour'.

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CENTRAL AFRICA PRISON-HOUSE

R. Page Arnot

WHEN in the second week of January the British Prime Minister heard his host the Ghana Prime Minister proclaim the need for a 'union of independent African States' to enable them to stand up to the imperialist powers and his belief in the principle of 'one man, one vote', it was a programme of true democracy in a country that had gained its political independence. When in the third week of January he reached the Central African Federation it was to encounter shams and pretences that are the very opposite of democratic. All the apparatus of bourgeois democracy is present: a federal parliament, a prime minister (now the Right Honourable Sir Roland Welensky) and even a leader of Her Majesty's Opposition. But the whole set-up is bogus. The dictionary definition of 'bogus' is: 'an apparatus for counterfeit coining'. This exactly describes the sham nature of the Federation, which so far from being a voluntary union of states on a democratic basis is set up only to hide a reality that is undemocratic, dishonest, reactionary and tyrannical.

To prove this we need take only the simplest figures of this 'Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland'. In the seven-and-a-half million population, Africans outnumber the Europeans by twenty-five to one. In the 'Federal Elections' of 1958 the European *voters* outnumbered the African *voters* by eighty-eight to one. This falsification of democracy is effected by a very simple trick. Africans have a right to vote—*provided they fulfil a property qualification plus educational standard.* For example no African may vote unless his income is over £120 a year: the average wage of employed Africans (official 1956 figures) is £70 a year: therefore most Africans are not allowed to vote at all.

Now observe the election situation in the three constituent parts of the Federation. In Northern Rhodesia there are 72,000 Europeans and 2,220,000 Africans: in the elections of March, 1959, there were 20,566 European voters and 7,617 African voters. In Southern Rhodesia there are 207,000 Europeans and 2,420,000 Africans: in the 1956 elections there were 49,854 European voters and 560 African voters. In Nyasaland, where there are only 8,300 Europeans amongst 2,690,000 Africans no general elections have been held.*

*Certain Africans were chosen from provincial councils but though the Europeans in Nyasaland have franchise rights the Africans have none.

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This bogus 'Federation' with its sham 'democracy' has now gone on for seven years ever since the British Tory Government here, breaking previous pledges, set it up in 1953. The Labour Party here were against it and their representatives opposed the Bill in parliament. But if the Labour Party were opposed, it can be imagined what was the feeling of the Africans upon whom it had been imposed. The African National Congress in each of the three territories denounced it. The more they saw of this 'Federation', the stronger grew the demand for secession; strongest of all in Nyasaland. All this was well known. A parliamentary delegation of four Conservative and three Labour members, unanimously reported after their visit to Central Africa in August, 1957, that 'Opposition was to be found strongest in Nyasaland'; and the Governor of Nyasaland himself, Sir Robert Armitage, declared:

> The African is reluctant to accept federation because he cannot believe that he will ever be allowed to play a role equal to that of the European. He distrusts both federation and the movement towards greater independence for the federation, because he insists that this means a continued and fiercer domination by the White man over the Black. (Federation News Letter. April 19, 1958.)

Meantime Welensky had gone on to demand 'Dominion Status' by 1960 for his white settlers' 'Federation' (under the Act the 'Federation' was to be confirmed—or modified or rejected—after seven years' operation and before nine years elapsed) and this confirmed all the Africans had feared. The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (in its Synod of Blantyre, Nyasaland) underlined this at midsummer, 1958, in a report—which in March, 1959, was adopted by the Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland:

> It is difficult to understand how the Federal Government can demand and work for Dominion Status in the near future. This is the cause of one of the greatest fears amongst Africans. They see their country becoming a 'Native Reserve' on the South African pattern, and various statements made by European political leaders had aggravated this fear. (East Africa and Rhodesia. July 3, 1958.)

Finally, less than five months after Dr. Hastings Banda, as the most distinguished son of his people, had been called back from London to lead the struggle for democracy as president of the Nyasaland African Congress, an article by him appeared stating:

> Sir Roy Welensky's demand for Dominion Status in 1960 confirms our original fears that federation was desired by the European settlers as a means of gaining mastery over us, as they have done over our brothers in Southern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa, and to drive the nail into the coffin of any possibility of African States in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. (*Ghana Daily Graphic*, December 18, 1958.)

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Dr. Banda was completely correct in his estimation and completely justified in the standpoint he took and in the campaign he carried through—for all of which he has now been eleven months in prison without trial. Meantime repression in Nyasaland was intensified (Amended Police Ordinance Bill of December, 1958): the police were being mobilised: and from Welensky's 'Federation' government troops of the Royal Rhodesia Regiment were sent across the border into Nyasaland. Was there a deliberate purpose here to provoke disorder and so provide a pretext for declaring a state of emergency? However, this may be, the disturbances in Nyasaland increased, naturally enough: and by February, 1959, the Africans were insisting, in action, on free speech and free assembly.

That was just a year ago: and everyone will remember what followed: how in Southern Rhodesia the Governor there proclaimed a state of emergency on February 26, 1959: outlawed the African National Congress and threw hundreds of its leaders into concentration camp or prison: how Governor Armitage proclaimed a similar emergency on March 3: and how on the evening of March 3 Lennox-Boyd wound up the House of Commons debate by talking wildly of an alleged African plot to massacre Europeans. Then came the wholesale arrests, the ban on the Nyasaland African Congress, and the shootings. Not a single European was killed: but more than 50 Africans were killed.* It is still fresh in the memory how the mounting protests here compelled Lennox-Boyd a month later, on April 7, to appoint Mr. Justice Devlin and three colleagues to be a Commission of Inquiry on 'the recent disturbances in Nyasaland and the events leading up to them': and how he hoped, it was clear, to get away with it by this means. And how, on the contrary, the Devlin Report, issued in July, was damning for the Government, if only for the verdict or true word on its first page that Nyasaland was 'a police state':

> Nyasaland is—no doubt only temporarily—a police state, where it is not safe for anyone to express approval of the policies of the Congress party, to which before 3rd March, 1959 the vast majority of politically-minded Africans belonged, and where it is unwise to express any but the most restrained criticism of government policy. (Cmnd. 814, July 16, p.1.)

Then remember how Lennox-Boyd and Macmillan haled the wretched Armitage to London, said 'Read that and write some sort of answer—and write quick' and then had the further effrontery to publish the poor fellow's laboured reply as a Government White Paper (Despatch by the Governor, Cmnd. 815). But this did not avail them much: and so in the House of Commons when the

*See *Nyasaland Massacre* by Hugo Rathbone in *Labour Monthly* of April, 1959.

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Stitch, stitch, stitch . . .

Tailoring in Bethnal Green, London,

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1860

In poverty, hunger and dirt . . .

Work — work — work,
Till the brain begins to swim;
Work — work — work,
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!

(From *The Song of the Shirt*, by Thomas Hood)

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matter was coming up for debate they strove to avert criticism by announcing on July 21 yet another commission, an Advisory Commission on the Federation of Central Africa, to be headed by the respectable Lord Monckton. But the first twenty of the membership of this body was not announced until well after the October General Election, until Lennox-Boyd was out of the Government, until November 24 when it was also intimated that half-a-dozen more seats would be filled later, half from the Government and half from the Labour Party. Then remember the dreadful thing that happened to Macmillan. A Sunday newspaper, *The Observer*, callously blew the gaff by showing that every one of the twenty had a record that was, to say the least, very unlikely to inspire majority African opinion with much confidence in them. The Government were very hurt about this newspaper article: 'it was not fair', complained Leader of the House Butler. But worse was to follow. The strong opposition of back bench Labour members to the Commission as constituted and the objections to the way that Macmillan appeared to have been already committed by Welensky made it clear that the offer of vacant seats on it was just a parliamentary trap. The Labour Party refused to participate: and as a result still more sections of African opinion are now likely to boycott the Monckton Commission. Finally, the Government ruefully sought to mend matters by appointing to the vacant seats a brace of former members of the Labour Party, Lord Shawcross and A. Crawley, for whose record when they were in the Labour Government the Labour Party have little respect. There the matter stands at present.

Behind all these recent happenings there is a longer history of deep significance. Just a hundred years ago the execution of John Brown of Harpers' Ferry sparked off the struggle that brought the American Civil War between the South (slave states) and the North. It was the attempt of the South to extend slave-holding into new territories that brought the crisis to a head. For a slave system seeks always to expand to new territories. So today in the Union of South Africa the *apartheid*, the modern form of slave state, seeks expansion. The white settlers have been its apt pupils in Southern Rhodesia. They too have passed repressive laws against their African majority. They too wanted to seize upon new territories to the north.

Originally the white settlers of Southern Rhodesia had the choice in 1923 between becoming a self-governing colony or becoming a new province of the Union of South Africa. They chose the former but remained on good terms with the *apartheid*-mongers then

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headed by Prime Minister Dr. Malan whose followers were usually called the Malanazis. The Malanazis had dreamt of a new slave empire stretching from the Transvaal to the Equator: so that there was some ill-feeling between them and their younger rivals some ten years ago when the Southern Rhodesian whites revealed that they had a similar dream. Indeed, Dr. Malan was furious at the Southern Rhodesian whites for 'jumping his claim'. But these quarrels were like the quarrels between the German and Austrian fascists a quarter of a century ago and could easily be compounded even now in a joint conspiracy to enslave all the lands to the north.

At first, when the white settlers bluntly proposed to annex the two Protectorates of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, they called it 'amalgamation'. When this was rejected in 1938 and again after the war, they devised in the early 'fifties the scheme for 'Federation'. The scheme by that time had a double object: first to lay hold on the extremely rich copper ores and other minerals of Northern Rhodesia, and second to get cheap labour from the people of Nyasaland. It was a plan to grab both material riches and human beings.

Now in 1960 the hour of decision comes nearer. The struggle is apparent to everyone. The land-grabbing, undemocratic, colour-bar, low-wage system storming up from Southern Rhodesia encounters the National Liberation Movement led by the dozen African independent states. Central Africa is a focus of this conflict—wherein the British people can play their part not only by the boycott of the original *apartheid*-mongers in South Africa but by demanding the repeal this year of the 1953 Federation Act.

Meantime anxiously watching it all the giants of finance capital (which still holds its economic domination over the whole of Africa) are extending their grasp also in the rich agricultural and mineral tracts of Central Africa. No longer is it the preserve of the old Chartered Company which ruled and exploited from the time that two of the territories were defiled by the name of the unprincipled adventurer Cecil Rhodes. Some two-score of the biggest British firms and banks like Unilever and Barclays Bank are entrenched there: while United States capital has also begun its penetration. The same forces of monopoly capital that exploit the British workers are the blood-suckers in Central Africa. The trade unions there and the trade unions here in Britain are up against the same adversary and the democratic struggle for the right of Africans to be free politically merges in the class struggle of both Africans and British for emancipation.

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THE LEFT MUST FIGHT

Councillor Peter Grimshaw*

AFTER the electoral defeat in 1955, the right-wing called for 'New Thinking'. This phrase covered the real intention of a further retreat from socialism. Since the Labour victory of 1945, policies have gone further and further towards the right, and in the same period the people have gone further and further away from Labour. This demonstrates quite clearly that when the people of Britain voted decisively for a change in 1945, they meant it. They did not want attempts at patching up a system that produced wars, slumps, the social evils of bad housing, overcrowded schools, the plight of the old-age pensioner, long hours of overtime in boom periods instead of real wage increases, and 'you've never had it so good' hire-purchase prosperity. At the same time the take-over bidders, the capital-gains and golden-handshake boys have lived in ever increasing luxury.

During this period the hard core of the working class have stood solid in their support for a Labour Government, not so much voting for right-wing labour policies, but voting anti-Tory, conscious of the main enemy of the people. A large section of the people, seeing little or no difference between right-wing Labour and the Tories, became confused and abstained. Since the defeat of 1955 the 'New Thinkers' have come forward with policies that would put a radical to shame, let alone a socialist. And in meeting the criticism of the left-wing they have boldly proclaimed that these policies were essential for Labour to ensure electoral victory. Now we have the people's answer to these policies in the shape of an increased Tory majority in parliament, and the lowest post-war Labour vote. The right-wing continues this betrayal of the fight for socialism, that has brought about three successive defeats, with Mr. Gaitskell's proposal to throw overboard Clause 4* of the Labour Party constitution. Let us be quite clear that the mass of the British people were not aware of the existence of Clause 4, only the active members of the party knew it was there. The ordinary man and woman respond to a party at elections, mainly on the basis of the policies and leadership in fighting for those policies, not just on the

*Councillor Grimshaw, as many of our readers will know, is Secretary of the Salford City Labour Party.—Ed., *L.M.*

*4. 'To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.'

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eve of an election, but on the concrete issues of the day as and when they arise. The people of Britain have given judgment on the right-wing leadership and its policies. Of course, Mr. Gaitskell knows that it was not the existence of Clause 4 that failed to rally the majority of the people for Labour at the election. Why then does he want to get this clause out of the way? Consideration of this question poses another one. Does Mr. Gaitskell want a victory for socialism? He answers this question himself when he calls for a 'mixed economy', shares in industry (to remain in the control of the capitalists) and only taking over those industries that 'fail the nation'. This is a betrayal of socialism.

The fight of the left in the Labour Party (weak though this has been) is for more socialist policies, for more nationalisation, not along the lines of the existing nationalised industries, but nationalisation with worker participation in control, that would move towards socialisation as quickly as practicable; a more socialist approach on the question of compensation, so that wages and conditions of the workers in the nationalised industries become the first charge on the industry, modernisation the second (in a fashion that would make for a cheaper commodity or service to the consumer), and compensation the last charge. Likewise on the question of foreign policy, the left have demanded an end to Britain being a puppet of America through membership of N.A.T.O. The cold war alliance has carried with it the heavy cost of armaments and the consequent inroads into the living standards of the people, with less money available for social services; cuts in the subsidy for re-housing, failure to build new schools or to develop the health services to a proper level, and has left the old-age pensioners in the plight they are now in. In the fight for these demands the left have been able to point to the ultimate aim of the movement—socialism, as set out in Clause 4. Therefore, if this clause can be 'revised' the question of a socialist policy will no longer exist as an embarrassment to the right-wing, socialism will have been finally denounced and the labour movement betrayed.

Some comrades are talking as if the Labour Party had already dropped Clause 4 and are speaking of setting up breakaway organisations. This would be suicidal. The task of the left-wing is to rid itself of political corruption arising out of the cold war propaganda, to end its apologetic approach, rid itself of hesitation, and build a unity of action of the left, as a condition for fighting in a way that it has never fought before, to rally support not only to retain Clause 4, but to make it a living reality in our policies.

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THE RAILWAYMEN AND COMMON OWNERSHIP

Les Hurworth

WHEN Labour won the 1945 election, and the first majority Labour Government was formed, railwaymen, together with millions of other industrial workers believed they had seen the last of the bad conditions which the private owners had for so long imposed upon them. When later the Government had implemented their election pledges, and in 1947 nationalised the railways, these workers really felt that the future held grand prospects for them and their industry. Few then believed it possible that in six years a Tory Government would be back in power, dismantling certain sections of the industry (of which British Road Services was a very lucrative one), and by its financial policy, making it difficult, to say the least, for the British Transport Commission to pay its way, or to pay its employees wages equivalent to private industry. And how many at that time could have thought for one moment that the Labour Party, the party which they had helped to form and foster, and which they so ardently supported, would step by step, retreat from the very idea of nationalisation, until in the election year of 1959 nationalisation was almost a dirty word?

Today they find the Labour Party leadership, not only on the verge of repudiating nationalisation, but also questioning the value of continuing to include Clause 4 in its constitution. Dealing with the principle of common ownership generally, this is the clause which gave them the mandated right after the 1945 election to go ahead with their schemes of nationalisation of which transport was one. The older generation of industrial workers will remember that the first plans for nationalisation were to include railways and mines because of the disastrous state into which they had been allowed to fall, and because of the pitifully low wages and the bad conditions of labour which were the lot of the employees. These were to be only the first plans in a whole series of legislative measures designed to cut the power of the financiers and industrialists, whose grip on the economic power of the country had brought poverty, unemployment and misery for more than a century. Such legislation was eventually to give the workers control of their industries and pave the way for the socialist state which had been the goal of their pioneering heroes like Keir Hardie, Tom Mann and a host of others.

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Today, after twelve years of nationalised transport, we are witnessing the beginning of the fight for wage rates comparable with outside industry. I welcomed the decision of the London District Committee of the National Union of Railwaymen to call a token strike in support of their claims, recognising that this token strike was for the purpose of supporting the N.U.R. claim for a wage increase irrespective of the results of the enquiry. Such action should never have been necessary and we can only consider Sir Brian Robertson's recent statement as a piece of sheer hypocrisy.*

It must be emphasised that, however much this fight develops, and however much the railwaymen achieve out of these struggles, they and their industry will be committed to continuous struggle, until socialist nationalisation replaces the capitalist nationalisation which operates today. To leave industry as at present, 20 per cent nationalised and 80 per cent privately owned, will not bring us one step nearer the goal of common ownership. In its present form the 20 per cent publicly owned will always be used to provide cheap services for the other 80 per cent. We know that the Tories will never do anything to change this position, and if the Labour Party leadership succeed in altering or deleting Clause 4 then a whole succession of Labour Governments will not alter it either. Railwaymen, like employees in other nationalised industry, must recognise that without an extension of nationalisation of a socialist character, neither they nor their industry will ever get a square deal. Railwaymen must fight for the retention of Clause 4, and ensure that common ownership remains the ultimate goal.

*The independent pay review committee is due to report next April. On January 11, 1960, Sir Brian Robertson said that *if* the report seems to justify higher wages for railwaymen, the British Transport Commission will discuss with the unions an interim increase. He appealed for a 'little further patience'. By April the committee will have been in session for eighteen months!

THE DICKENS ILLUSION

I

Mr. Bevan referred to the 'downright ignorance' of many Russians who imagine Britain to be still living as in the time of Dickens.

(Press report of Aneurin Bevan's television broadcast in Moscow, September 6, 1959.)

II

'They are living a sort of workhouse life which Dickens exposed a hundred years ago—I thought these days had gone forever'.

(Magistrate Mr. Edgar Borden, J.P. of Bristol. *The Times*, December 29, 1959.)

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FOUR STARS

Last month's campaign notes expressed confident hopes of our 1960 prospects—and very justifiably. If every other month is like January we shall be on top of the world come next Christmas. The Joe Scott article in defence of shop stewards and Jack Mitchell's contribution to the discussion on the labour movement's way ahead proved to be very good campaign bases. With only two weeks of the month gone, we have already had in orders for fifty-nine copies from three engineering union district committees. That is in addition to orders from union branches and shop stewards committees. A wonderful effort by workers there resulted in the sale of ninety copies of the January number at a Dagenham motor factory. Over twenty more were sold at the Daily Worker's *'Which Way for Labour?' conference.*

So to the February number and with your help we shall do at least as well and, with a bit of luck, even better. I would star four articles for your attention. The first is the Notes. *Resurgent Nazism, the Soviet disarmament proposals and the forthcoming Summit meeting all put peace issues to the fore in public interest. Will it be a successful Summit? A well-informed, alert public opinion can do much to decide that question, which is where we come in with suggestions for sales to peace groups and to clinch those factory arguments with vital facts and figures. The second star is for* The General Council and Shop Stewards, *a telling argument on what the Trades Union Congress ought to make its principal concern. Related in interest, the third star is for Councillor Peter Grimshaw's* The Left Must Fight. *There is growing revulsion of feeling at the bans and proscriptions which hinder the anti-Tory struggle. Use this article to help smash them down. Star number four for R. Page Arnot's second* Africa *article. With Macmillan tootling around that continent, the recent Kenya discussions and the boycott of South African goods movement there is very wide interest in African affairs which should make for ready sales on the basis of this article, not least amongst the many co-operators who are active in the boycott campaign.*

Star articles all right—can we now have some more star sellers? Will you help? Order campaign copies from us right away. And as a final word, we should be very glad of phone calls from volunteers to help sell outside the British Peace Committee's conference in London on February 13 and 14.

G.B.

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RACISTS AND MILITARISTS

Ivor Montagu

[*At a time when the Adenauer government's prosecution in Dusseldorf of the advocates of world peace has been accompanied by intensified militarist propaganda and renewed racialist outbreaks, we have pleasure in printing this speech delivered at an international protest in Berlin on January 13. The meeting was organised by the Peace Committee of the German Democratic Republic and of the three thousand who thronged the Friedrichstadt-Palast over a quarter were ticket-holders from West Berlin.—Ed.*, L.M.]

WE are meeting at a time when a reappearance of open anti-Semitic manifestations, triggered off by incidents in Germany, has aroused widespread horror and indignation both in other countries and in Germany itself. These incidents have occurred—in a spreading series—in many countries, Britain, Scandinavia, America, even Australia. But a Soviet newspaper has wisely said: in such countries as Britain and U.S.A. such incidents are like a light cold to a healthy man—in Germany they are dangerous because the patient has been deeply affected by the disease.

I have not come here to speak of faults or ills in another people, but as a medical man, to diagnose a sickness dangerous to the whole world. It is often forgotten that anti-Semitism is only a part of the nonsensical idea of racialism in general. The idea that peculiar merits or deserts lie in a particular race which can win benefits for itself at the expense of everyone else. This idea is not only scientific nonsense—for there are no pure races any more; your people, the Germans, and my people, the British, are among the most mixed in all the world. It is not only social nonsense, spread by reactionaries to divert the peoples from uniting to overcome the real obstacles to their wealth and happiness. It is not only an idea that, in its different manifestations, shames many peoples. Not only Germans, but Americans in their southern states, the British in Africa, indeed (and I say this firmly as myself a Jew) that it shames Jews also—for the behaviour of the Israeli Government toward Palestinian Arabs, and of Jews in South Africa who share there in the infamies committed against Africans.

The main thing is that it is a folly that dooms the people that indulges in it. There are no 'superior' peoples any more. Man is one family, and must on this earth so live. As one community. Not divided into rich relations and poor relations. And any people

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that tries to do it, is surely doomed, to an early doom—whether it be the apartheid whites of South Africa, or the pitiful would-be 'Aryans' of Germany, or the 'pink' peoples of Europe and America in general. Indeed, and I say this quite clearly to Jewish friends who may think that the argument against the Nazis is that racism hurts the Jews. This is not true, the real argument is that it does not help the Germans. Any more than the atrocities of Hola helped the British or of the Algiers transit camps can help the French. Any of us and all of us can only live if we find ways and means of putting up with one another. Ways of respecting and advancing, in common, the interests of all. The true patriots are those who realise this. The noblest men and women are those who spend their lives and health in trying—in time, because the time is short—to teach this lesson to others. It is men and women of this stamp who are on their trial today before the court in Dusseldorf.

Edith Hoereth-Menge, Erwin Echert, Walter Diehl, and their companions. When I read the accusations against them I am astounded. Traitors? Acting against the interest of their peoples? Of what people in the world is it not true that its own supreme interest is peace! Stooges? Acting in accordance with the dictates of others? Dear me! Dear me! I am sure our accused friends will forgive me when I say that my own liveliest recollection of working with them as colleagues is of long sessions far into the night, even early morning, and disputations in committee, until *they* were well satisfied that resolutions took care of *their* viewpoint in every dot and comma!

I wish to come back briefly to the theme with which I began. If militarism and racialism deeply infect Germany, who in Germany should be honoured, respected and supported above all? Those, surely, who preach peace and the brotherhood of man. I ask myself who is to blame for the return of sparks of life to Nazism in Germany and their infection elsewhere. And I answer: some of those, indeed, who are now busiest condemning it with an attitude that we call in English 'Holier than thou'. The demonstrations against these revivals have been great—in London, Washington, Paris, also West Berlin. Press declarations against them have been universal—in all these places and also in Bonn. The feeling of horror entertained by good people everywhere, not least in Germany, is noble and refreshing. But a part of it, among certain people, is the cry of the robber who shouts 'Stop thief!' as he runs so that the crowd shall not realise it is he who committed the crime.

Who rearms Western Germany? Who encourages the idea that

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Germany can be united otherwise than by agreement? Who fosters the absurdity—long disapproved by history and buried by the sputniks and luniks—that an 'advanced' West can, by strength, impose terms upon a 'backward' East? Who refuses to recognise that the boundaries of the Third Reich are gone for good and can never be restored, and that the attempt could only mean a new World War in which the German people would be the first to perish? We all know the answers to these questions.

I am afraid these schemes, or dreams, bring their own logic. If you want to advance such crazy plans, whom must you seek as allies, officials, officers and non-commissioned officers among the Germans? We know this answer, too. You do not seek such as those now on trial in Dusseldorf, and their ideas, though it is precisely those who *should* have been encouraged if the demons that inspire Nazism were to have been effectively exorcised. No, you do not seek the peace-loving, for they will have nothing of such schemes, but the militarists, the racists, the refuse of Hitler's accomplices, the rich who profited from his evil. You have to promote these. They are your natural friends, you dare not slap them down. And who can then wonder or blame if deluded and stupid youngsters think it no crime to follow where others favour? Yes, among those, within and without Germany, who condemn anti-Jewish excesses today are not a few who themselves are blameworthy, and whose anxiety is only in case the excesses of their proteges should too soon alert the world. The danger of a Nazi revival in Germany today comes precisely because these ideas and illusions have been fostered. My friends, the accused in the Dusseldorf trial are guilty, but of what? They are guilty of seeking to advance controlled disarmament, to end the nuclear menace to mankind. They are guilty of seeking to unite Germany, peacefully and by agreement of all Germans. They are guilty of seeking co-existence, not hostility; negotiation, not the arms race; of seeking a Summit meeting, such as now, at last, the Great Powers are agreed upon; above all, of seeking peace. They are guilty, in other words, of seeking in deed, what the millions of humanity all pray for, what no statesman today dare disavow desire for—at least in words—and what would constitute the greatest good for all the German people.

I am no lawyer, I do not know the law. But if this, of which they are undoubtedly guilty, is a crime anywhere in the world, then that is no stain upon them but only upon those who dare to challenge them and ask their condemnation.

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CRISIS OF SOCIALISM?

Joanny Berlioz

[*The discussion of the so-called 'Crisis of Socialism' is not confined to Britain, but is developing in all the Labour and Social Democratic Parties of Western Europe. A review of these new trends and discussions on an international scale has been opened in the French progressive journal* Democratie Nouvelle, *and we have pleasure in making available to our readers the main sections of the opening statement by its editor, Joanny Berlioz.—Ed.*, L.M.]

SINCE October 8, 1959, when the Labour Party was defeated by the Conservatives in the British General Election there has been much discussion in the press about the 'Crisis of Socialism', this set-back being generally considered as a confirmation of the 'retreat of the socialists in Europe'. It has even become fashionable to state that 'socialism has had its day', and, doubtless so that it may linger on a bit, socialist parties are being eagerly advised to undertake a revision of their principles and to adopt 'a new-look programme', etc.

This kindly advice has not fallen on deaf ears, for the search for political programmes unencumbered by definitions and 'out-of-date' slogans has been undertaken by a number of socialist parties, doubtless in accord with the audacious explanation of electoral reverses given by *Les Echos* (October 10), that in their countries 'the revolution had already taken place'. This is the case especially in the Austrian and Dutch parties and most of all in the German Social Democratic Party. This last at its special Congress at Bad-Godesberg on November 19 carried its break with the past so far that the *Rhenische Merkur,* the most reactionary mouthpiece of finance capital in the Rhineland, was able to rejoice in these terms:

> The C.D.U.* can put to its credit the turn about of social democracy (S.P.D.) as the finest fruit of its campaign!

The S.P.D. broke completely with all that remained of the socialist ideology contained in the old Heidelberg programme of 1925; it announced support for the 'liberal-democratic' state of Adenauer and for the 'national defence' of West Germany, that is to say it accepted monopoly capitalism and militarism, limiting itself to recommending a vague public control of monopolies with a view to 'liberalising' them. In May, 1958, the Austrian Socialist Party had already adopted a new programme. The final text is less anti-marxist

*Christian Democratic Union, the party of Chancellor Adenauer.

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than the original draft, because, meantime, the thesis of Benedikt Kautsky (son of the old Kautsky) on gradual democratisation and sound evolution of capitalism had been upset by events in France and the intensified recession in U.S.A. and because of the rising protest of the rank and file of the party against the complete abandoning of marxist principles. . . . The Labour Party itself is engaged in a lively debate, as yet undecided, between the right and left wings. Other parties, like the S.F.I.O. keep in their archives documents linked with the old traditions, but their actions show that they consider them out-dated.

All is not well with the parties of the Socialist International—no question of that. At the end of the war the socialists led or participated in the Governments of 22 countries—today only in 8. They have everywhere lost a large proportion of supporters and electoral votes (over 200,000 members and two million votes in France, 300,000 members in W. Germany). But it is an abuse of words to describe this general recession as 'a crisis of socialism'.

One knows, without going back to the 'National-Socialism' of Hitler, that socialist terminology is used at random, because of the attraction exercised on the people by genuine socialism. For socialism is alive and full of health for a thousand million building it fast between the Elbe and the Pacific. Truly it is hard to speak of the crisis of a system which the capitalist experts state whether they like it or not, to be demonstrating its superiority over theirs more and more each day. First, therefore, let words be given back their proper meanings: what is in retreat and without perspective of a future is not genuine socialism, but social democracy; the crisis is amongst those who have abandoned and betrayed socialism in order to serve a declining bourgeoisie, and who set themselves to revise Marxism from top to bottom on the pretext that there have been 'changes' since *Capital* was written, changes so fundamental that today 'free competition, free private enterprise, etc.', should be proclaimed as principles of socialist political economy.*

'In a way', one reads in *Les Echos*, commenting on the Conservative victory in Great Britain, 'socialism has served its turn. It has achieved most of its objectives, shorter hours of work, social security, opportunities of promotion for workers, a fairer system of taxation'. It is true that capitalism has conceded certain demands which comprise just about all the socialist programme of Ollenhauer, Guy Mollet, Gaitskell, Saragat. But we must not exaggerate

*This hymn of 'freedom' under the aegis of the monopolists and the militarists is actually found in the midst of many other enormities, in the programme put out by the Congress of Bad-Godesberg.

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nor shut our eyes to the inadequacy of the reforms conceded and the current tendency to nibble them away and sometimes brutally reverse them. The bourgeoisie, when under strong pressure, at times knows how to pay the price necessary to avoid revolution; faced with the formidable mass movement of 1945, it resigned itself to make big concessions. But the set of demands that included only reforms of this sort, was in no way socialist, and when they insisted on not going any further, or even on the lines of the Austrian socialists, when they urged the workers not to put burdens on the economy by claiming too much and in practice to allow social gains to be reconsidered, then the time comes when they reach the end of their short tether, and have no programme left.

The socialist leaders also theorised that a programme was no longer so necessary, since they were now concerned with a new capitalism, full of good intentions, which would glide smoothly into socialism. They constantly harped on economic 'changes' and sought to justify their views in books written to encourage dreams of a people's capitalism freed from the characteristics of classic capitalism.

Superficial analysis of changes, without regard to their class character, has always been the alibi of revisionists of Marxism, whose lineage goes back to the later years of Marx himself; they seek in them theoretical justification for opportunist practice.

Certainly there is no lack of changes. The industrial revolution progresses ever faster. Very valuable scientific and technical advances modify productive forces. State monopoly capitalism has become a marked feature of bourgeois society and exercises an influence on the further development of capitalist production. The structure of the whole of the salaried classes has undergone a change, particularly since automation has extended (differences of skill, differentation of salaries, etc.). New forms of capitalist production pose new problems and the social reality of today deserves an examination that is concrete and searching.

The right-wing leaders of the social democrats are in a state of crisis because, in spite of their deceptions a growing section of their followers have seen that the main laws of the capitalist method of production are still valid.

The makers of the 'new look' platforms have allowed themselves, voluntarily or otherwise, to become confused by minor changes, and it would cost them too much to admit the facts which would demolish their scaffolding of illusions.

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Commenting on the last congress of the S.P.D. *Le Monde* observes that it is not the Congress of the rupture with Marxist ideology (which was complete long ago), but rather '*of a rupture with any kind of ideology or long-term perspectives*'. Here is the crisis with a vengeance. A hotch-potch of references to Plato and Aristotle, to Christian ethics, to humanism, to classical philosophy, describes the disarray of some souls when faced with unexpected realities, but it will not satisfy those who are questioning things and desire something new.

Clearly all the militant social-democrats are not traitors. There are, for example, among them sincere idealists who desire the dignity and freedom of man-in-the-abstract, unconnected with the relations of production. In the parties in crisis there are deluded workers who are seeking a new way and who indeed are hardly consulted when 'modern' programmes are being laid down (the pontiffs of the S.P.D. smothered all critical resolutions coming from the rank and file). It is in gathering together these men of goodwill that these groupings, such as the Nenni socialists in Italy, the Autonomous Socialist Party (P.S.A.) in France, believe they will be able to reinvigorate the waverers.

Other possibilities for reorientation suggest themselves. In Germany, those expelled from the S.P.D. are seeking a way; in Great Britain, trade union leaderships are turning towards the left and the Victory for Socialism group is very active; in Sweden, the left wing of the social democrats has turned itself into a 'Progressive Union'; in Austria, the militants are expressing the wish—and not in irony—that among all the revisionist cliques in the Socialist Party, there should be found place for a working party of 'socialist social-democrats'.

We will be glad if this article can be the point of departure for a more profound international enquiry into the 'crisis of socialism' which has varying aspects in different countries, and into the attempts at a rescue and the limits thereof.

Eleven million men and women belong to the Socialist International, the trade unions under socialist influence have 55 million members. The influence of social democracy is still exercised in various forms in many places; it is not possible to abandon so many people in the throes of the 'crisis'. We must facilitate their convalescence, the solution of their confusion, we must help them to understand the radiant alternative to capitalist decadence: socialism, the efficient organisation of modern society over more than a third of the earth's surface.

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TEN YEARS IN TEN MILE INN

David Crook

(*Continued from the January number*)

SOME Ten Mile Inn villagers owned plots in other villages: peasants in other villages owned plots in Ten Mile Inn. This wasted time walking to and fro. It interfered with ploughing: things had not yet developed to the point at which one co-op would plough another co-op's land. This hardly fostered the spirit of co-operation. Nor did disputes over the different crops to be planted by different co-ops owning adjoining fields. If sorghum, growing to a height of eight feet with long spreading roots, were to be planted on both sides of low-lying crops like peanuts, these would be deprived of sunlight, air and nutriment. Sometimes agreements were negotiated; sometimes they were broken. A Ten Mile Inn co-op agreed with its neighbour not to plant sorghum on a certain plot: then it changed its plan. Members of the first co-op pulled it up.

Private ownership and collective use of implements and draught animals also led to contradictions. Sometimes, just when an animal was needed for muck-spreading, its owner would claim it for grinding grain at the mill or because his wife must visit a relative.

These were the problems. They were not the main trend. In general, it was clear that the solution lay in more co-operation, not less, in increasing the payment for labour and decreasing that on investment. In the autumn of 1955 the distribution principle was accordingly readjusted to 70% for labour done, 30% for land invested. This was only a first step. That same winter there was widespread discussion of Chairman Mao's speech on agricultural co-operation, in which he compared the hesitance of certain local leaders to an old lady tottering timidly on tiny bound feet. In Ten Mile Inn they concluded that an advance to fully socialist co-operatives must be made with distribution based solely on work done. Some such co-ops already existed in the county. Leading villagers from Ten Mile Inn went to see how they were run and talk things over with their members. They became convinced that such co-ops meant bigger yields and better living—and that they had the ability and resources to set them up. So in 1956 Ten Mile Inn removed all its boundary stones and established a 'high level co-op' embracing the entire village. This strengthened village unity and made for far more rational use of land, labour and draught animals, concentrating resources permitted investment in more

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efficient implements. Seventeen two-wheeled, double-shared ploughs were bought—a great improvement on the old type. More important still, with the boundaries removed, tractors could be used for the first time. There was an upsurge of enthusiasm and production would undoubtedly have taken a leap forward but for exceptionally bad weather, hail storms doing much damage, especially to the wheat crop: the year might have been disastrous. But the socialist co-op proved its worth. Disaster was staved off and increased yields of 1955 were actually maintained. In 1957 output rose again, this time to 258 *jin* per *mu* for grain and 80 *jin* for cotton. And this advance brought another achievement in its wake. The buying and selling of the means of production, the trend towards class differentiation, were brought to an end. So far as objective obstacles went, the way was cleared for a great leap forward.

But objective obstructions are by no means the only ones in the path of human advance. Faith can move mountains: lack of it, even on the part of a small minority, can act as a brake on progress.

In and around Ten Mile Inn the enthusiasm for the high level co-op was widespread. But it was not universal. A small minority was lukewarm, sceptical or even opposed. It was this sort of situation which gave rise to the 'Great Debate' in the countryside in 1957. In South Yangyi, a couple of miles west, where about one sixth had doubts, and a handful of families was opposed, the Great Debate was carried out by 'presenting facts, making comparisons and reasoning.'

In the old days, before the land reform, there had been a poor peasant in South Yangyi called Su Wen-he, whose family's land yielded less than half a pound of grain per head per day; so they had to subsist largely on chaff and wild herbs: they never ate meat even during the New Year festival. Su had four sons but he was too poor to arrange a marriage for more than one of them. In the famine of 1942 Su and his youngest son both died of hunger. They buried Su in a reed mat; for the son they could only dig a hole by the road. With land reform the family's holding was increased to nearly five acres and they received two donkeys. Within a short time the two remaining bachelor sons got married and it was not long before Su's widow found herself with a family of three sons, three daughters-in-law, four grandsons and three grand-daughters, 'with twelve silk quilts, five cotton quilts and ten pairs of rubber overshoes.' When she died, shortly before the Great Debate, she was buried in a fine coffin and the leaders of the co-op came to pay their respects to the bereaved family.

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When this story was told by Su Wen-he's sons during the Great Debate, it reminded many listeners of their own past, moving them to anger at the thought of the old landlord rule, to resentment at those who opposed the reforms, and in some cases to remorse. One peasant had been so poor in the old days that he had no home of his own and slept in temples or in the gateways or under the eaves of other people's houses. After the land reform he became a 'well-off middle peasant.' But with the improvement in his own fortunes he failed to support the co-operative. 'I drank the water, but forgot who dug the well', he said during the debate. 'If it weren't for the Communist Party I'd have been dead long ago. How could I have failed to support the co-op? I was black-hearted.' And he struck himself.

It was much the same in Ten Mile Inn itself. One well-off middle peasant named Wang Jia-wen had complained that 'now that a man can't buy land any more, things are worse than they were before liberation. You can't even eat decently any more.' During the Great Debate a lean, young man named Wang Ling-rung said to Wang, 'You talk as if you represented all of us. But you don't. You just represent yourself and one or two others like you. Were you really better off before? I wasn't. Now we all get enough to eat. And that includes you: the rest of us are as well-off as you are. So you think you're worse off than you used to be.'

Such 'presenting the facts and making comparisons' not merely won the minority of waverers and even convinced a good part of those opposed. Perhaps more important still was the effect on the majority, who already supported co-operation. A boundless prospect opened which they had never even dreamed of before; mechanisation, electrification, full-scale irrigation. It filled them with enthusiasm and confidence for the great leap forward.

For them the output of grain per *mu* shot up to 316 *jin* and of cotton to 115 *jin*, through better use of land and labour, more efficient implements and techniques, particularly deep ploughing.

But the most spectacular advance was on the industrial front.

'We hardly knew what iron and steel looked like before', said the secretary of the Ten Mile Inn branch of the Young Communist League. 'But eight out of ten of all the young people in the village smelted it in 1958. It was the same all over the country. More than twenty of us have mastered the whole process, from making furnaces to turning out the finished product. We've got certificates from the county headquarters. We worked all out for the first ten days or so, until we'd really got the hang of it. One or two people

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like young Li worked five days and nights at a stretch, without going to bed. But he was lively as a cricket, singing away.' It turned out that the speaker himself had done the same; and many of the girls, too, had stuck at the arduous job for long hours.

So Ten Mile Inn made steel, fifteen tons of it; and in so doing helped to create a commune. This is how it happened. Ten Mile Inn and the three or four villages around it were quite a few miles from the iron and coal mines; and the other villages had only pack animals, no carts. One animal could carry a load of a hundredweight and a half. A cart could carry ten times as much. If all the animals were out transporting coal and iron, how would the farmwork be done? Ten Mile Inn, being on the highway, had long done carting as a sideline and had a number of carts. If only Ten Mile Inn could do the carting for the other villages. . . . But they were all different co-ops. . . . The peasants pondered and discussed this problem. They knew that in the Soviet Union there were big collective farms. They had seen films about them at the mobile cinemas. Some of them had been to conferences in the provincial capital or even in Peking where they had heard peasant delegations report on visits to the Soviet Union. Couldn't they set up some sort of a collective farm? Leaders from several villages in the locality went more than once to the sub-county government, strongly urging such action. Transport was one of many problems urging the co-op. members towards a larger organisation. Another, more vital still, was water.

Ten Mile Inn lies on the bank of a river bed; the Min is dry most of the time—or in flood. 'Don't marry your daughter into Ten Mile Inn', the saying went, during the dry months the water would have to be carried on a shoulder pole for well over a mile. Other villages were even worse off. One poor old man in nearby Bolin, during a drought, carried two great buckets of water twelve miles from a spring in the hills. When he got home he stumbled on a stone step and spilt the lot. The next day he left the village swearing he would never go back.

A more effective solution was to be found. There is a watershed in the hills at Xiao Yetao village, thirteen miles from Ten Mile Inn, but the water-flow was not efficiently used for irrigation, and it was the cause of constant friction. Even to this day 'socialist emulation' between Bolin and Yangyi is not absolutely unmixed with a memory of old quarrels over water. In 1956 there was a drought and the newly established high level co-op. of Bolin sent a great contingent of peasants upstream, stationing a man every third of a

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mile to prevent interference with the flow of what little water there was. But the people living along the stream knew the lie of the land far better; they diverted 'their' water, none got to Bolin.

Leaders of the different co-ops. broached the idea of a joint water conservancy and irrigation project. The response was by no means whole-hearted. The people in the villages upstream were not interested! those far downstream swore the water would never reach them. One man in Bolin said, 'If a drop of water ever flows here from Xiao Yetao I'll crawl between your legs three times'. Only the villages in the middle reaches favoured the project, but lacked the resources to undertake it alone. Besides, a channel would have run through the land of several co-ops., so that property boundaries and land utilisation also entered into it.

With high level co-ops. came problems of local government, such as duplication of administration. By the late summer or early autumn of 1958 it was clear that a new type of political and economic unit was necessary, and possible. The whole Chinese countryside was beset by similar problems and its five hundred million people were working out a variety of solutions. These were analysed and synthesized by the Communist Party. The most effective form of all—named by Chairman Mao himself—was the people's commune. 'Chairman Mao said the communes were the best. And the district government leaders said we ought to learn what they were and how they were run', said a member of the present commune committee. In Ten Mile Inn four hundred and thirty households applied to set up a local commune.

In September, 1958, thirty-three high level co-ops. merged to form the Yangyi People's Commune. Membership was voluntary, but every single household in Ten Mile Inn joined.

What has been the effect on the lives of the people?

Retail sales by the Ten Mile Inn co-op. store were three times higher during the first six months of 1959 than in 1958. Where has the increased purchasing power come from? Increased production. Within two months of the setting up of the commune with its 37,000 people and over 16,000 acres of land, a village reservoir in Ten Mile Inn and a thirteen-mile-long channel feeding it were dug. One-seventh of the village land is now irrigated, the rest will be within two years, when a much larger reservoir many times as large has been completed by the joint work of several communes. Even the most doting parents now need have no qualms about their daughters marrying into Ten Mile Inn. Nearly half of the village land is already ploughed by commune tractors.

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Three of the drivers or trainees are from Ten Mile Inn—two of them girls. There is no electricity in Ten Mile Inn yet, as there is in Xiao Yetao and Yangyi; but the village already has radio diffusion and takes part in commune meetings conducted by telephone with loudspeakers attached.

What of the general gains of the last ten years? The commune leaders worked out for me the changes in the fortunes of one old acquaintance. In his family the income per head is now nearly eight times what it was; but that is partly because there are more earners in the family as the children have grown up. When I was last in Ten Mile Inn the youngest son was thirteen and he was green with envy—as he now confesses—for my leather belt. Now he is one of the commune accountants and his wife is a tractor driver. And he has two leather belts of his own. But the accounts of last year cannot be stated simply in terms of leather belts, or even in family income figures. Perhaps they are summed up more strikingly in the fact that the wild herbs which the people used to eat are now being fed to pigs. Or in the statement of commune member Wang Tsung-liang, the worldly possessions of whose family of six used to consist of 'an eight-sided table' (with the original four corners worn away) 'a three-legged stool and two ragged quilts. The rest of the stuff could all be put into one basket. Now I've got eleven grandchildren' (traditional symbol of happiness and prosperity) 'and two lorries couldn't hold all our stuff'.

Does all this mean that the people's commune differs from the earlier stages of development—land reform, mutual aid, co-operatives—in that it has solved all the people's problems? No. There is no progress without problems. And the communes are still in their early stages. Progress and problems in plenty lie ahead. Living standards are far higher than they were, but they are still not high. In Ten Mile Inn social services such as communal dining-rooms and nurseries—and with them the emancipation of women from household drudgery—are still only part-time affairs, functioning only during rush seasons. Yet still more complex problems lie ahead—such as that of turning farmers into economic planners and administrators of such a large unit as the commune. Above all there is the problem which the whole of China faces today: an acute shortage of labour. But the last ten years give assurance that these problems will be solved: and they foretell bigger and better leaps ahead in the next ten years in Ten Mile Inn.

(Concluded)

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BOOKS

The Slaves of the Cool Mountains

Alan Winnington

Lawrence & Wishart. 224 pp. 25s.

THIS is a fascinating book. Alan Winnington writes of what no European has ever seen or will ever see again, a last glimpse of 'a by-passed product of human history'. In 1957 he visited three communities, near the Burmese border, in China, hitherto almost entirely out of touch with the surrounding civilisations, the Norsu, the Wa and the Jingpaw. These societies—each very different from the others—are now beginning rapidly to change, leaping over the epochs of history that divide them from the modern world. When Alan Winnington was there, the change was just beginning and the old social and economic relations were still there to examine, as they had existed prior to the impact of the Chinese People's Republic.

The Slaves of the Cool Mountains, although it reads with all the lightness and excitement of a traveller's tale, is very much more; it will arouse a wide and general interest—amongst politicians because it shows the skill, courage and wisdom of a handful of Chinese communists in building a bridge between the new China and other peoples so long hostile to the oppressive Hans; amongst economists and sociologists because here is displayed the economic structure and ideological attitudes of a slave society just emerging into feudalism (the Norsu), a primitive communist society in which slavery has just begun to develop (the Wa) and a second primitive communist society, the gay, poetic Jingpaw which, developing differently, has an hereditary caste of rulers but no slaves bar a few non-Jingpaw captives.

My personal reaction was an excitement such as a reviewer rarely experiences; it took me, as it were, to a peak from which to look on one side onto man's past and on the other into our modern world with its own brand of sorcerers and fear-bound attachment to 'the devils we know'. So to feel the living unity of man's past and present is a tonic that helps the human soul to find magnanimity enough to set course for the future. It is a pity that the author has left out so much detail (e.g., the feudal privileges referred to on p.31) and it

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is hoped that he will in due course find some way to make available as material for scientific enquiry every scrap of information collected under such unique historical circumstances.

JOHN EATON.

Correspondence of Frederick Engels with Paul and Laura Lafargue. Translated from the French by Yvonne Kapp.

Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow. Illustrated, Vol. 1. (1868-1886). 408 pp. 6s.

[In the August, 1955, issue of Labour Monthly, *we announced that several hundred letters of Frederick Engels and the Lafargues had been unearthed: and were to be published in three volumes by* Editions Sociales *in Paris. By the kindness of the editor, Emile Bottigelli, we were enabled to put into print for the first time (in our issues of August to November, 1955,) sample letters from Engels bearing on British events. Publication in France began in 1956 and was completed last year. In the translation reviewed below the whole correspondence will appear in English.—Ed.,* L.M.]

PAUL Lafargue was born in Cuba. As a boy he went to France and, after being expelled from the university for organising students, came to London. He married Laura Marx. After taking his degree as an English physician he returned to France. He was active for the Paris Commune of 1871 and, after its fall, escaped to Spain where he helped the Spanish socialist press. During this difficult period Laura was with him. Lafargue was harassed by the Spanish police: but yet this did not deter him from pursuing the fight against Bakunin and his followers in the First International. Lafargue was also sent to Italy on behalf of the International. He returned to London in 1872 where he endeavoured to earn a living in business as a photo-engraver. This lasted some years but, with mounting difficulties, he returned to France where he carried on ceaseless socialist agitation by lecturing, writing articles and pamphlets and translating Marx's works. Whilst serving six months' imprisonment he wrote, with Guesde, a fellow socialist prisoner, the noted *Programme of the French Workers' Party.*

It is surprising that during the extremely dangerous and trying period in Spain, Italy and France a correspondence could continue between Engels and the Lafargues. Here are intensely interesting passages on the life and work of Karl Marx penned whilst he was alive. Here, also, are recorded the facts of Marx's death and the finding of a considerable amount of unpublished literary work, including 'about 500 pages in folio' of *Capital,* which was published posthumously as further volumes of this work.

There are continuous requests by the Lafargues for financial aid from Engels. Although it is not at all clear, there is the possibility that, as stated on page 53, arising out of the sale of Lafargue's house in New Orleans an arrangement was made for Engels 'to take the house at the valuation rate, to repay yourself what I (that is, Lafargue) owe you and to *credit me with the rest*'.

There are defects in the family tree given at the end of the book. For example 'Guido' as son of Marx is given, but this certainly should be 'Henry Edmund Guy'; as also with 'Franziska', which should read, 'Jenny Eveline Frances'. (Here it can be noted that three daughters

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were named after Jenny, Marx's wife.) Lafargue's children do not appear in the family tree. Finally, Eleanor was never married to Aveling (1891 is given as the date). Their free union commenced in the summer of 1884 and continued until Eleanor's death in 1898.

Readers will want to refer to this book again and again, for facts are many and errors very, very few.

S. G. HUTCHINS.

Philosophy for Socialists
Maurice Cornforth
Lawrence & Wishart, 1959.
2s. 6d. 61 pp.

Science, Faith and Scepticism
John Lewis
Lawrence & Wishart, 1959.
13s. 6d. 136 pp.

THE triumph of socialism in our epoch shows man becoming the master of his destiny, building a new social order and transforming the world. Only one kind of general outlook fits in with this picture and makes it possible. It is known as dialectical materialism. Maurice Cornforth confines himself to a simple but far-reaching explanation of what these two words involve. An elementary outline is often more difficult to write than an elaborate one, but the author is eminently successful in showing how to look at things and processes dialectically, giving many homely illustrations, and in showing that this outlook must at the same time be based on materialism for a scientific understanding of natural processes and social development.

Cornforth correctly emphasises that 'to adopt a materialist philosophy is not to adopt some theory about the "nature of the world" but to adopt a definite approach to the questions with which life confronts us'. This is an answer to the opponents of dialectical materialism who do not understand its difference from metaphysical materialism and charge it with being as much a philosophical dogma to be taken on trust as any of the idealist philosophies.

This subject is dealt with at greater length in the book by John Lewis, who first of all deals trenchantly with all kinds of religious mystical and idealist 'explanations' of reality. He goes on to show that the fashionable modern trend of bourgeois philosophical scepticism, while also claiming to reject 'metaphysics', proceeds to cast doubt on the scientific outlook as well on the ground that it involves metaphysics, applying this too to the outlook of Marxism. Hence these philosophers are left with a nihilistic outlook that leaves them out of relation with the everyday world and they end by encouraging credulity and irrationalism. In contrast, Lewis ably defends the road of science as the only road to truth and goes on to devote a major part of his book to the application of a fully developed scientific outlook to history and human society in opposition to the views of bourgeois historians and philosophers. He thus arrives at the same defence of Marxism as the unity of theory and practice that forms the conclusion also of Cornforth's little volume.

CLEMENS DUTT.

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(Continued from page ii of cover)

came an expression of 'pride that *L.M.* has remained in continuous publication for nearly four decades, despite all difficulties', with 'our fervent wish that it will never be forced to cease publication from any cause whatsoever'. *An American reader* sent his son to visit us in person; and a cheerful *Canadian* posted $5 to the magazine which is 'still the best and I'd be lost without it'. This is echoed by a *Midlands miner*, who said: 'You have no idea how much we rely on *L.M.* The quicker we spread it around the quicker we shall see the end of capitalism and a socialist Britain'. Then there were the *Scottish miners* in *Lanarkshire* and in two big pits in *Fife* ('a toast to good old *L.M.* !'); and from others in the *Durham coalfield* whom I last saw at the Miners' Gala there ('A little surprise I collected for you from the boys at the pit'). *Miners* and *musicians; engineers* and *cine-technicians.* And *printworkers*—with whom I spent a wonderful New Year's Eve party of celebration for the six men acquitted of charges arising out of the printing dispute.

Or take the doctors: a *London doctor* sent 'an extra guinea as New Year present'; a *Sussex doctor* wrote: 'After paying the end of year accounts I find I can manage to contribute my £9 towards sending the Manager out on tour, and hope others of my profession may be able to follow suit'. (Is there another doctor in the house?) That Out-With-The-Manager Fund has now reached £33 3s. 0d. over a third of the way towards the target of £90 which a benevolent reader has offered to double when achieved. So the Fund begins to look healthier, as a *Londoner* points out with pleasure, 'better totals than last year. Let's hope it is maintained. What should we do without our *L.M.*—and an *L.M.* still at 1s. 6d?' One *Middlesex* reader is watching the total with—literally—a calculating eye; for his New Year resolution is: 'In addition to my weekly contribution, I shall add one penny for each pound the fund reaches'. This month his penny-in-for-a-pound plan will cost him 6s. 3d., for donations during December totalled:

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